

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a porous cementitious product, which method comprises in the following order:

forming a cementitious premix;
casting the premix in a desired configuration;
generating gas bubbles within the premix; and
curing the premix,

wherein, after casting but before curing of the premix, the gas bubbles are generated and/or collapsed at specific locations within the premix in order to produce a porosity profile along a cross-section of the product such that the product comprises a relatively low density core region and higher density outer regions and wherein the porosity increases gradually away from an outer surface of the product and decreases gradually towards another outer surface of the product, wherein a formwork is used for shaping the premix in the desired configuration, wherein the premix is confined in the formwork in order to contribute to the ~~desired~~ porosity profile, and wherein gas bubbles at an outer surface of the premix are caused to collapse to produce a relatively dense skin.

2. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein gas bubbles are generated by incorporation in the premix of a heat-activated gas-generating agent.

3. (currently amended): A method according to claim 32, wherein the lid of the formwork is ~~fabricated in such a way so as~~ adapted to allow gas dissipation when gas bubbles collapse at the premix/lid interface.

4. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein, after casting but

before curing of the premix, the upper surface of the premix is subjected to trowelling, screeding and/or rolling in order to cause collapsing of expanding premix.

5. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein, after casting but before curing of the premix, the formwork is vibrated vertically and/or laterally at an appropriate frequency and amplitude in order to achieve an even distribution of premix within the formwork, to control the cross-sectional bubble distribution and/or to improve ~~the quality of finish~~ smoothness of the product surfaces.

6. (currently amended): A method according to claim 4, wherein a formwork is used for shaping the premix and wherein the formwork is vibrated vertically and/or laterally at an appropriate frequency and amplitude in order to achieve an even distribution of premix within the formwork, to control the cross-sectional bubble distribution and/or to improve ~~the quality of finish~~ smoothness of the product surfaces.

7. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein, after casting but before curing of the premix, one or more parting lances are used to inject gas ~~gas bubbles are introduced at selected locations into a cast~~ the premix by use of sparging apparatus.

8. (previously presented): A method according to claim 7, wherein the sparging apparatus comprises a sparging lance comprising an elongate hollow member having a series of holes through which gas may be injected into the premix.

9. (previously presented): A method according to claim 8, wherein the lance is moved through the premix during gas injection to provide a distribution of bubbles appropriate to achieve the desired porosity profile.

10. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein, after casting but before curing of the premix, the premix is sufficiently viscous to achieve gas bubble retention but not so highly viscous so as to inhibit bubble formation.

11. (currently amended): A method according to claim 10, wherein the viscosity of the premix is controlled by varying the premix temperature, by blending of fine materials into the premix to obtain desired particle graduation for optimal flow properties and/or by incorporation into the premix of ~~appropriate additives~~ a superplasticising admixture.

12. (previously presented): A method according to claim 11, wherein the viscosity of the premix is controlled by incorporation into the premix of a superplasticiser.

13. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein the strength to density ratio of the cementitious product is controlled by varying the extent to which ~~the premix is gassed~~ gas bubbles that have been generated in the premix are retained.

14. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein the strength to density ratio of the cementitious product is controlled by varying the degree of confinement of the premix as it expands due to generation of gas bubbles within the ~~matrix~~ premix.

15. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the strength to density ratio of the cementitious product is controlled by selection based on premix strength.

16. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~prior to~~ after casting but prior to curing of the premix, an upper surface of the ~~cementitious product~~ premix is finished by cutting, trowelling, screeding or rolling.

17. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the cementitious product has a consolidated, dense outer skin.

18. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein the premix is a high strength premix that on curing would yield a product having a compressive strength of from 60 to 120 MPa (in non-gassed form).

19. (previously presented): A method according to claim 18, wherein the premix is used to manufacture a cementitious product having a dry density of from 1000 to 1500 kg/m³ and compressive strength of 10 to 25 MPa.

20. (previously presented): A method according to claim 18, wherein the cementitious product has a 1-day strength of from 75-90% of its 28-day strength.

21. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the product is~~ curing of the premix takes place using heat cured at atmospheric pressure.

22. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the cementitious product exhibits a flexural strength of from 3-4 MPa for compressive strengths of from 15-20 MPa for product densities of from 1300-1500 kg/m³.

23. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the cementitious product has a thermal conductivity of from 0.3-0.6 W/m.K for product dry densities of from 900-1300 kg/ m³.

24. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein high shear mixing is used to vary the premix temperature and/or the premix rheology thereby allowing the viscosity of the premix to be controlled prior to casting.

25. (currently amended): A method according to claim 18, wherein the cementitious product has a ~~relatively low~~ residual water content of from 12-15% by weight.

26. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the cementitious product is manufactured in the form of a flat slab, wall panel, roofing tile, block-work system or paver.

27. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the formwork includes surface relief in order to produce a patterned surface on the product.

28. (currently amended): A method of manufacturing at least two cementitious products which are formed from a single cementitious premix and which have a different ratio of strength to density, which method comprises forming each cementitious product in accordance with the method claimed in claim 1 and wherein the strength to density ratio of each cementitious product is controlled by varying the degree confinement of the premix as it expands due to generation of gas bubbles within the matrix.

29. (previously presented): A cementitious product obtained by the method as claimed in claim 1.

30. (currently amended): A porous cementitious product having a porosity profile along a cross-section of the product such that the product comprises a relatively low density core region and higher density outer regions and wherein the porosity increases gradually away from an outer surface of the product and decreases gradually towards another outer surface of the product, the higher density outer regions imparting impact resistance, abrasion resistance and resistance to water absorption.

31. (canceled).

32. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the formwork has a lid in order to restrain rising of the premix and cause collapsing of expanding premix on contact with the lid.